



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana
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IM Weekly Highlights

- This week's IM outreach meetings were lively and informative. Many thanks to the some 70 attendees! See the **Upcoming Meetings** section of this newsletter for next week's outreach schedule.
- Butte-Silver Bow Public Works Dept. completed road upgrades to the Red Mountain site by installing water bars as requested by the U.S. Forest Service. We applaud government officials who contributed local resources to this effort.
- A comprehensive article about the IM radio system in Hill County appeared in the *Havre Daily News*, and is available at this link: http://www.havredailynews.com/articles/2009/08/17/local_headlines/local.txt
- The U.S. Air Force held a media event at the staging area of the Highwood Baldy site in the Central Consortium in the morning on Fri., Aug. 21 with lots of local, state and federal partners. More to come.
- **Editor's note:** Last week we inadvertently reported that Northern Tier coverage testing in Lincoln County was completed. It will begin soon.

PSIC Grant Extension Bill Amended and Renumbered

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Last May, the *Heard Across Montana* newsletter ran an article about a bill that was introduced by Congressman Joseph Cao to the U.S. House of Representatives to extend the deadline for completion of Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) grant activities by two years to October of 2012.

The bill has been slightly revised and is now renumbered to H.R. 3348, an amendment to the Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005. Since the inception of the PSIC grant program, a number of states have been drawing from the Digital Transition and Public Safety Fund that was set up to help the state upgrade and repair emergency communications systems. However, several states (particularly in the Gulf Region) have struggled to meet the program's requirement for matching funding and project completion deadlines. Many need more time to develop and complete infrastructure and training projects eligible for funding under the program. This extension will give

state homeland security agencies the time needed to access grant funds and complete communications projects.

The Congressional Budget Office has reviewed this amendment and determined that it does not entail additional expenditures. It merely shifts the program's original budget forward.

This bill has the support of the International Fire Chiefs Association, The National Emergency Management Association and the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials.

For more information or to co-sponsor, please contact Rep. Cao's Legislative Assistant, Monica Sanders at Monica.sanders@mail.house.gov or 202-225-3118.

IM Finance Committee

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Members of the IM Finance Committee received several updates at their August 10 meeting, including reports on the bank account register, funding sources, and the status of all DHS grant funding. They learned that award letters have been issued to Yellowstone County and the MT Dept. of Transportation for three sites and that all submitted NEPAs have been approved.

Amy Mays, DES, and Bill Fleiner, IM Finance Officer, are researching options to address an operating budget shortfall. Amy also updated the group about the federal DES monitoring visit last week. Mark Canton, Motorola, provided an update on planning actions related to the Second Master Controller. A project manager has been named and equipment and software lists are being compiled. A fall target date has been set for the system update.

Plans are in the works to have Public Safety Services (PSSB) personnel visit North Dakota to review a 700 MHz mesh network to determine relevant applicability for use in Montana. In addition, a meeting on coordination issues is scheduled in Havre on August 21 with the U.S. Border Patrol.

Bill Fleiner reported that IM Outreach meetings have begun, with the first one completed in Broadwater County. These are being scheduled and will continue to take place in various areas of the state over the next month or so.

The next IM Finance Committee meeting will be Tues, Sept. 8, from 9:00 to noon at the offices of Anderson ZurMuehlen, 825 Great Northern Blvd., in Helena.

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IM Governance Committee Stays Informed

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The IM Governance Committee (IMGC) members were updated on IM bylaws, position descriptions, business practices and fleet mapping during its Mon., Aug. 10 meeting in Helena. In addition, members learned that the SCIP evaluation report was completed, an IM organizational chart is under development, and Dorothy Gremaux, Fergus County, and LeAnn Hermance, Pondera County, have volunteered to serve on the training sub-committee.

The group reviewed the current draft of IM policies and procedures, made minor changes to it, and approved moving the document on to the IM Project Directors.

Mark Adams, Northrop Grumman, provided an overview of the Remote Visual Assessment (RVA) program and how it interfaces with the IM. The Air Force and Northrop Grumman are working with the IMTC on three co-located sites (Sullivan, Garneill, and South Moccasin).

Ian Marquand, Public Affairs and Outreach Consultant, reported that planning for the IM outreach meetings is well underway. The committee is working to make sure appropriate representatives are invited to each meeting. Ian also continues to put together video pieces for the production of an IM video.

Bill Fleiner reviewed the recent Dept. of Homeland Security field audit.

The next IMGC meeting will be Tues., Sept. 8 from 1:00 to 5:00 pm at the offices of Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.

Project Directors Highlights

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

On Tues., Aug. 11, the Interoperability Montana Project Directors (IMPD) met in Helena. This article contains a brief synopsis of meeting highlights.

Kevin Bruski, IM Executive Director, provided a comprehensive update. A milestone has been reached because the IM has now received approval for all outstanding NEPAs. Work is beginning on new NEPA applications for sites on the Eastern end of the state. He reported on purchase orders and other procurement issues. Kevin also noted that the SOP technical assistance workshops were well attended and informative.

Dave Hinds, US Air Force Project Manager, announced that all agreements have been completed and signed. He also outlined the upcoming construction schedule, which will result in

being able to turn on the entire system by mid October.

Standing Committee reports were given for the Finance, Governance and Technical Committees. Krystal Stewart, Anderson ZurMuehlen, provided updated financial details and reports. The IMPD also officially adopted a revised draft of IM Personnel Policies and Employee Benefits.

Amy Mays, DES, gave a report on the DHS site monitoring visit, while Ian Marquand brought the group up to date on IM outreach meetings. Mark Canton, Motorola, explained the phases of the second master controller project; and Roger Smith, IM, reported on fleet mapping progress along the Northern Tier as well as network design updates. Considerable progress is being made. Brian Sewell, IM Project Manager, announced that the Montana National Guard last-mile hop RFP has generated several comments. The RFP closes on Aug. 24. Brian also has been working on site user agreements.

The next IMPD meeting will be held on Wed., Sept. 9 in Room 152 of the State Capitol in Helena from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Upcoming Meetings

IM Outreach Meetings

Aug. 25 – Hardin • 1:00 pm

Big Horn County Courthouse
121 3rd Street

Aug. 26 – Billings • 10:00 am

Yellowstone County Courthouse
217 North 27th St.

Aug. 26 – Roundup • 7:00 pm

Musselshell County EOC
706 First Street E.

Aug. 27 – Billings • 10:00 am

In conjunction with the Big Sky 11 Meeting
Billings Police Dept. Training Center
4810 Midland Rd.

Aug. 24

IM Technical Committee

Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

MACo Large Conference Rm., Lower Level
2715 Skyway Drive

Aug. 26

Eastern Tier (ETIC)

Glendive • 10:00 am

Dawson County Courthouse Community Room
207 W. Bell

Aug. 27

Big Sky 11 Consortium

Billings • 8:30 am Technical Committee

• 10:00 am Board Meeting

Billings Police Dept. Training Center, 4810 Midland Rd.